



Administrative Office of Courts

ACDD, MIS, Juvenile, & Traffic Divisions

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Welcome

Welcome to *Technology Update!*

In this issue, we highlight the new E-filing system. We will show how it will help our courts advance towards a more paperless system. We also focus on a new way to help jurors pass the time.

As always, if you have any awards, questions, or special features you would like to see us cover in one of our issues, please e-mail us at newsletter@alacourt.gov.

Madison County Juror Computer Lab Is a Big Hit!!!!

-by Jane Smith

While waiting to be utilized, jurors in Madison County can get some



work done or pass the time playing a game of solitaire on the computers now available for their use. As a result of a local one-time special legislative appropriation, all old computers in the Clerk's and Judges' offices have been replaced. Six of the GX110 computers have been cleaned and reloaded with wireless internet access, Microsoft Word and a game folder.

The chairs at the computer stations are the first to be filled when jurors return to the jury assembly room. Jane Smith, Circuit Clerk, reports that the feedback has been very favorable. The jurors especially appreciate the ability to check their emails and stay in touch with their offices. For the total cost of \$225.60 for six wireless cards, old equipment has been recycled and is making the juror "down time" a little more bearable and in many cases more productive.

Spectrum Cards already in use!



Recipients are already using the convenience of their new Spectrum Cards to receive their child support payments. They can use their new cards at ATM's, point of sale, or anywhere else that accepts VISA. It is a huge advantage to the paper check, which could be easily lost or stolen en route to the recipient.

*To date we have had 2,500 applicants.

[Continued on Page 2](#)

Questions or comments? E-mail us at newsletter@alacourt.gov

Volume 1, Issue 5, August 2005



Alabama Judicial Building
300 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104

Newsletter Spotlight

Welcome

Juror Computer Lab

Spectrum Card

E-filing Articles

August Birthdays

09 Jessica Crawley

16 Michael Gregory

23 Paula Collins

31 Chiandra Thomas



Editors:

Jeremy Darabaris

Jennifer McCartha

Joshua McCartha

Shel Singleton



TECHNOLOGY UPDATE



The Huntsville Times

County takes lead in pilot project for electronic filing of civil cases

By DAVID HOLDEN
Times Staff Writer dholden@htimes.com

200 lawyers gather to learn how to use high-tech upgrade

About 200 lawyers gathered Thursday at the Madison County Courthouse to learn about a high-tech upgrade in the court system that promises to make some of their work easier.

Because of budget and personnel cuts, the circuit court had to seek alternatives to help handle cases efficiently, said Madison County Circuit Clerk Jane Smith. So, starting this fall, attorneys will be able to file lawsuits and associated documents electronically without going to the courthouse, she said.

The county is taking the lead in a state pilot project for electronic filing of civil cases. Criminal court filings will follow later, Smith said.

Officials from the Administrative Offices of Courts, the agency that oversees the state's unified court system, and Alacourt.com Online Information Services Inc., the company which provides AOC data access, conducted the training session.

The federal court's electronic filing system for lawyers is the model for the state system, said Mike Carroll, deputy administrator of AOC. However, the state's system will serve a broader base of customers than the federal system, he said. The Alabama Supreme Court approved the electronic filing, Carroll said.

Currently, lawyers take paper copies of lawsuits and motions to the clerk's office. Thanks to recent technology improvements, the lawsuits and documents are available over the Internet shortly after they are filed.

Filing over Net

The new system will now allow lawyers to file court papers from their offices over the Internet through the Alacourt.com system. The base fee for the service is \$84 per month. Attorneys will also be able to receive e-mail about court orders and the latest filings by opposing parties.

With wireless technology, attorneys can access records from courtrooms and elsewhere in the courthouse using laptops, hand-held personal data assistants or cellular telephones. The lawyers were urged to join a subscriber service to gain access to court records from across the state.

Richard Tingle, an attorney for 32 years in Huntsville, said the new service is a good idea.

"We need to do this," he said. "It's going to help out with the manpower requirements in the circuit clerk's office and speed up the handling of motions."

But, Tingle warned, there are going to be some growing pains, because all lawyers are not computer literate.



TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Circuit courts embrace e-filings

By [Mike Linn](#)
Montgomery Advertiser

Five Alabama circuit courts, including Montgomery's, will accept civil lawsuits through T-1, cable and dial-up lines in the upcoming weeks, blazing a trail for a paperless Alabama court system.

The pilot program is one of many in an effort to make Alabama courts more user-friendly.

Montgomery attorney Richard Moxley, a collection attorney, said the e-filing mandate in bankruptcy court has saved him time and money.

"It's unbelievable how well it works," he said.

The other counties in the pilot program are Lee, Russell, Madison and Baldwin, the first county to start the program next week.

Montgomery's circuit court will allow for e-filing after Labor Day weekend.

The state Supreme Court authorized e-filing Friday.

Court officials next summer will make a decision on whether and how to implement the program statewide, said Mike Carroll, technology manager for the Alabama Office of Administrative Courts.

He said e-filing will save time for court officials, attorneys and those who represent themselves in civil lawsuits, also known as pro se filers.

"Once we receive this in electronic format, we can just continue to keep it electronically, which means routing it to the judges' offices becomes a great deal easier. You would never lose the paper file again, and more than one judge -- if they had to -- could look at the same file simultaneously ... a lot of advantages," Carroll said.

All court documents will have backup files, he added.

E-filing court documents is nothing new. The district federal court in Mobile mandates it.

In Montgomery's federal court, the practice is optional, court officials said.

Another local attorney, Michael Braun, said he files most of his documents electronically in the federal court. He often files circuit court papers by mail, he said.

"If it runs as smoothly as it does in federal court, then I'm all for it," he said. Carroll said attorneys must register to file electronically.

He said there will be a short study session in the next few weeks for lawyers wanting to learn how the circuit court program works.

Another paperless and user-friendly program offered through the Alabama Office of Administrative Courts allows motorists to pay traffic citations online.

The program began earlier this year in the tri-county area and is available for fines that don't require a court appearance.

Need help with a computer related problem or interested in learning more about Basic PC maintenance, Microsoft Word, Excel...online? For answers to the most common questions, visit <http://helpdesk.alacourt.gov>

This is a nice link that might interest you.

http://www.ncsconline.org/d_tech/courttechbulletin/

Note:

The links found in the newsletter are not interactive, you will need to copy and paste or type in the address to the web address bar.